

[Granville Mashon]

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Range-lore

Elizabeth Doyle

San Angelo, Texas. Interview

Page one Tales - Personal Anecdote

RANGE-LORE

Granville (Dad) Mashon of Barnhart came from Brown County, Texas, to Irion County when a very small lad. He says he started with the Bal-4 outfit when he was just large enough to walk, meaning of course that he was of a ranch family and was on the job from the beginning. His story follows:

"I started my range experience when I came with my parents to Irion County as a toddling youngster. They were ranch people and I never knew anything else. I learned to ride almost before I could remember. Old Gouch was my faithful old standby and I rode him long after I was old enough to cut cattle. He was an old white horse and seemed to get whiter as the years went by. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 I don't know exactly how old he was when he died but he was a gettin' up in years and I felt like I'd lost my best friend when he died.

"There were quite a few Indians when we came here and they were still wild enough to be dangerous but our worst encounters with them was when we would be out on drives and come upon them. They would always demand a whole beef if not more and if we even hesitated to give it, they would stampede our herd and get more than they asked for. We were moving a herd across the Pecos once and just before we got to the river two old

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Indian warriors came riding out meeting us. One of them could talk a little English and as he approached our boss he said, 'Beef, beef?' This was his first experience with the Indians and he started in to tell them that they would be killed if they didn't go back and 'tend to their own business. At this the Indian began moving his arms and gesturing wildly, trying to make him understand that they meant stampede or a beef. I pushed old Gouch up by the side of the boss and said, 'Better give 'em one than several.' He yet didn't quite get it but he knew that I knew what I was talkin' about so he said to the Indian, 'Pick him out.' They grinned at each other, nodded, and then rode up and down the herd a few times, muttering and jabbering before they pointed out a big fat steer. They 3 knew their beef cattle all right and the boss said, 'Cut him out, boys,' which we did and went on our way without being molested further.

"Old Gouch was noted for how long he would stand if I dropped my reins on the ground and left him. As the boys would say, if Gouch was "grounded" he would stand there 'til he died if I didn't go back and pick up the reins.

"I have seen as many as 50,000 head of cattle being handled by ten or twelve cowboys. In fact, I was in a bunch of about 30,000 once when ten of us boys carried them to Wyoming. We had lots of fun and lots of hardships. It rained nearly every day we were out and we had to sleep in wet blankets nearly every night if we got to sleep at all. Guess that's why I'm doubled up here in this chair with the rheumatiz now and can't get out.

"Bad weather and strange surroundings always made the cattle troublesome. On this drive to Wyoming we had one of the worst stampedes I was ever in. Lightning was the usual cause during bad weather and when it got to playin' up and down their horns we knew we were in for it. It seemed that one always took the lead and when the start was made that's all it took. The mud flew as they ran pell-mell over everything in their path. We ran those rascals eight long, dark hours before we even slowed them down. When we finally did 4 got them stopped we were so tired and hungry we didn't much care what happened but by the time we got breakfast and got settled down for some rest, up rode several Indians on

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some old poor ponies and made it very plain that they had plenty more Indians that they could bring out if we failed to give them two beeves. We thought by their asking for two that they must have a bunch as they never thought of but one meal at a time and usually asked for only one. We gave them the two beef cattle and were glad to be rid of them at that.

“Some of the old days I wouldn't mind living over again but not all of them, for times were pretty tough most of the time for me and I'll just take mine the rest of the way here in the little old town of Barnhart, nursing my rheumatiz and thinkin' it all over, day after day.”

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Granville Mashon, Barnhart, Texas, interviewed, November 18, 1937.